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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the fifty-eighth session

International Year of Sport and Physical Education

Letter dated 28 May 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On the instructions of my Government and in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour to request the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "International Year of Sport and Physical Education".

The Tunisian delegation would like this item to be included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly for consideration in plenary meetings. In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum in support of the above request is attached (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ali **Hachani**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Explanatory memorandum

International Year of Sport and Physical Education

1. Ministers and senior officials responsible for physical education and sport from more than 103 countries met at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 9 and 10 January 2003. They adopted a communiqué in which they called for according sport its rightful place in educational systems, protecting young athletes against the risks inherent in high-level sport and combating doping.

2. Physical education and sport are powerful factors contributing to peace and development. They provide an experience of solidarity and cooperation that is conducive to inculcating a culture of peace, overcoming social inequalities and fostering dialogue and consensus.

3. Physical education and sport provide excellent opportunities for young people to learn to communicate, cooperate, work in teams, respect others, acquire discipline and accept defeat. All these aspects are becoming increasingly important in a globalized world, in which it is essential to learn to live together in peace while preserving the cultural identities of all parties.

4. Physical education and sport are an integral part of the process of social development. They allow for a positive synergy among the various social partners (family, school, sports clubs and associations, local communities, social partners, the competent authorities, the public and private sectors).

5. In many countries, physical education and sport are facing increasing marginalization within educational systems, even though they are a major tool for promoting health, physical development and acquisition of the values necessary for social cohesion and intercultural dialogue.

6. The protection of young athletes should be understood in the light of the principles stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Protection of young athletes should be understood as comprising both the physical and psychological aspects of sport and as ensuring quality education that facilitates long-term personal and professional development. Protection of young athletes also covers such areas as child labour, violence, over-training, doping, premature specialization and commercial exploitation.

7. Doping constitutes a breach of sporting ethics and a danger to public health. The scourge must be combated by all means at the international community's disposal. Prevention remains the most effective tool to that end. There is an urgent need to elaborate an international convention against doping, so that the necessary measures of prevention and control can be introduced into national legislation in a consistent manner.

8. Consequently, Tunisia, being convinced of the importance of physical education and sport as contributors to physical and mental well-being, social advancement, development and peace, proposes that the General Assembly should include in the agenda of its fifty-eighth session a new item dealing with the points raised above and should proclaim an international year of sport and physical education in order to draw attention to the stated goals.